

## **Misawa AB Housing: Renovations and On Base First Policy**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Q1. Who will be allowed to move off-base?**

A1. Military families who currently live on-base and meet certain criteria will be offered the opportunity to move off-base if they wish. Members must have a DEROS of 2013 with more than six months remaining on station to qualify. The housing demand will ultimately dictate whether a member is offered the option to move-off base. K&E personnel are not eligible.

#### **Q2. The On Base First Policy (OBFP) states “if housing is not available in 30 days for inbound personnel, they will be authorized to secure off-base housing.” Why are you allowing current residents residing on-base to move off-base?**

A2. Leadership reviewed five courses of action and felt this approach was in the best interest of Misawa AB and the U.S. Government. The OBFP is still in effect and this enhancement plan was created to help alleviate the shortages of units available during housing renovations.

#### **Q3. Why is there a shortage of on-base housing?**

A3. Constant progress is occurring at Misawa AB in a committed effort to improve living conditions for base residents. As housing units are renovated, the available inventory will be limited.

#### **Q4. Why are only members with a 2013 DEROS offered the opportunity to move off-base?**

A4. As military family housing construction projects are finished in 2013 and housing units are brought back into the inventory, we will no longer need families to live off-base. The 2013 DEROS requirement means we will only have families living off-base for as long as we need them to, saving millions of dollars in housing costs. This option also allows families that have been at Misawa AB and want to live off-base the opportunity to do so, rather than forcing inbound families to live off-base due to housing unavailability.

#### **Q5. How will the Housing Office determine who will be offered the option to move off-base?**

A5. The Housing Office will have an approved waiting list populated by members who submit to the Housing Office off-base relocation request memorandums signed by their unit commanders. As housing inventory is required, the member in the rank category (JNCO: E1-E6, SNCO: E7-E9, CGO, FGO) and type (2/3/4-bedroom) with the shortage will be offered the option to relocate off-base. The order in which members in a category are given the option will be determined by DEROS (2013), rank, date of rank, and TAFMSD.

**Q6. How much are you expecting to save?**

A6. The OBFP saves U.S. taxpayer money and better utilizes existing structures. By allowing members with DEROS of 2013 to move off-base, we are projected to save an estimated \$8-\$17 million, depending on the number of families relocated.

**Q7. How do the savings add up?**

A7. These savings result from efficiently using on-base housing while reducing the amount of time families will have to live off-base and require expensive overseas housing allowances (OHA) and utility allowances.

**Q8. What is the effective date of this OBFP enhancement plan?**

A8. This policy is effective the first week of May 2012.

**Q9. When was this new enhancement developed?**

A9. Base leadership evaluated five options over the past six months as the projected housing shortfall developed. A lot of time, research, and thought went into the different potential courses of action, keeping cost efficiency and families' needs at the forefront of priorities. Leaders had to ensure that this was the right answer for our military families.

**Q10. Does this apply to all services?**

A10. Yes, the policy applies to members of all branches of service assigned to Misawa AB.

**Q11. Will all rank categories (FGO, CGO, SNCO, JNCO) be offered this option?**

A11. Currently the projected shortfall is in the SNCO & JNCO housing; however, due to the variable nature of housing, waiting lists for all rank categories will be made.

**Q12. How much will I receive in relocation costs?**

A12. The member will receive MIHA (\$673) and PDLA (\$683), as well as TMO and FMO support. The member may request advance OHA with the approval of their unit commander.

**Q13. Will there be any associated cost that I am responsible for?**

A13. Yes, typically there will be some cost to the member. The approximate up-front moving costs may be from \$0 to \$500 for incidentals associated with a move; e.g. internet installation, refrigerator restocking, etc. Additionally, there may be a deposit required which is normally refunded pending results of final termination; however, a pet deposit may not be refundable depending on property manager's policy. In addition, a member's OHA and Utility Allowance will not begin until they have terminated on-base housing with the Housing Office. A member may require several days to move from their on-base house to their new off-base house. During this period when a member has an active off-base lease and

is still occupying on-base housing, the member will be required to personally pay their off-base housing rent and utilities, approximately \$100/day.

**Q14. What is the benefit to Misawa AB for implementing this policy?**

A14. People are our greatest asset and Misawa AB leadership is committed to the care and well-being of our people. This policy encompasses this ideal by using taxpayers' dollars as efficiently as possible and giving the housing staff the ability to manage the housing inventory during an aggressive renovation program.

**Q15. Will this policy remain in effect forever?**

A15. No, the OBFP is still in effect; however, due to the shortage of available housing, the current policy has been altered. Once the renovations begin to finish and more on-base housing becomes available, the need to move people off-base will diminish.

**Q16. What if my DEROS is currently 2013, but my paperwork is in the process to extend me to 2014?**

A16. The current eligibility requirements only allow those with a DEROS of 2013 to move off-base.

**Q17. What if I extend my tour while living off-base?**

A17. If a member extends their tour while living off-base, the member may be directed to move back on-base as the housing inventory is brought back to its full numbers.

**Q18. If my rank or date of rank is incorrect in your database, how can I update it?**

A18. The housing office maintains a comprehensive eligibility process and accurate information is important to maintain this process. Interested eligible members will provide a signed letter from their Commander, which will include DEROS, rank, date of rank, and TAFMSD.

**Q19. What if the housing office does not receive enough members willing to relocate?**

A19. The plan will remain flexible based on the housing inventory requirements. If it is deemed necessary due to not enough members willing to relocate, the DEROS eligibility may be extended into 2014 by calendar year quarters (e.g. Jan – Mar 2014).

**Q20. What if my DEROS is Dec 2012, will you make an exception to policy?**

A20. There will be no early DEROS exceptions made for the eligibility requirements to move off-base.

**Q21. If I am offered an option to relocate off-base, how soon must I find a home?**

A21. From the day of the offer notification from the Housing Office, the member will have 48 hours to decide to accept or decline. If the member accepts the offer, they will have 10 calendar days to secure a lease and 10 calendar days from the day the lease is secured to terminate their on-base housing unit.

**Q22. If you offer me the option to relocate off-base and I am unable to accept the offer in the required time frame, can I be offered at a later date?**

A22. Yes, if a member is unable to accept due to an extenuating circumstance (e.g. TDY, deployment, etc.) they can be offered at a later date. Misawa AB leadership and the Housing Office are committed to making this as fair as possible, so their name will remain in the same location on the list and will receive an offer the next time the requirement exists. After two declinations, the member will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list.

**Q23. If you reach my name on the waiting list to move off-base and I am TDY or deployed, can my spouse or friend complete the move to an off-base home?**

A23. Yes, if a member's spouse or friend has Power of Attorney (POA), they can complete your move in the member's absence.

**Q24. Will I have the option to choose what day TMO will move my Household Goods?**

A24. Because we are making room for inbound family members and will have to clear your on-base home as soon as possible, you will be given the first available date that TMO will be able to relocate. This may require you to move on the weekend. Exceptional circumstances preventing a timely move will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

**Q25. Can I do a DITY move?**

A25. You have the option to complete a DITY move; however, you will be required to rely on the local economy for your move and availability may be difficult to find.

**Q26. If I am able to do a DITY move, can I be bumped to the top of the list?**

A26. No, the Housing Office has created a waiting list determined by DEROS, rank, date of rank, and TAFMSD to ensure all eligible members are awarded the same opportunity.

**Q27. Where will my child attend school if we are relocated off-base?**

A27. Beginning 2012-2013 school year, children living off-base will be required to attend Sollars Elementary. If your child is currently attending Cummings Elementary and would like to continue attending Cummings, coordination for approval will have to be made with the school and waivers will be reviewed. Cummings and Sollars Elementary Schools have decided that existing Cummings students moving off-base will be allowed to continue to

attend Cummings Elementary. Not all off-base areas have bus service to Cummings Elementary; please check with the Housing Office about off-base school bus services.

**Q28. Can I use a government-owned vehicle (GOV) to move my personal property?**

A28. No, if you have questions, please visit the 35 LRS, Personal Property Office in the Torii Bldg, Bldg 656 or call them at 226-3525/4510 for moving assistance/entitlement options.

**Q29. Will there be any special circumstances for members being allowed to move off-base if they do not have a 2013 DEROS, e.g. medical reasons, banned dependents, pet allergies, etc?**

A29. No, the OBFP enhancement is only needed during a period of an on-base housing shortage. Circumstances such as medical, banned dependents, pet allergies members are still required to submit an exception to policy to relocate off-base.

**Q30. If I choose to move off-base and I am required to move back on-base after my DEROS is extended, will I be offered a pet friendly unit?**

A30. The Housing Office will try to accommodate your housing requirements as necessary, but they cannot guarantee a pet friendly unit will be available.

**Q31. If I am not eligible to move off-base, can I get an upgrade to a larger unit on-base?**

A31. Not at this time. The higher occupancy rates have reduced the flexibility to offer upgrades.

**Q32. I do not have a 2013 DEROS, but my unit is scheduled to be renovated. Will I be moved into a newly renovated unit?**

A32. It will depend on the availability of new housing units; however, the Housing Office has been successful so far in relocating members into renovated units if they are directed to move.

**Q33. Are all the renovated on-base housing units pet friendly?**

A33. All of the townhomes are pet friendly. There are only six towers that are pet friendly and renovated towers will not be pet friendly.

**Q34. If I am a Tower 212 resident with a 2013 DEROS, will I be allowed to move off-base even though vacating my unit will not generate a unit in the housing inventory and you would not have to move me otherwise?**

A34. The Housing Office is considering this situation and will have an answer shortly.

**Q35. What is Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) and how does it work?**

A35. Members on active duty entitled to basic pay are authorized a housing allowance based on the member's grade, dependency status, and location. OHA is a cost-reimbursement based allowance and the member is reimbursed actual rental costs not to exceed the maximum OHA rate for each locality and grade. If a member's rent is under his allowable OHA rate, the member cannot pocket the difference.

**Q36. If I am on the 3-bedroom waiting list and I outrank the member on the 2-bedroom waiting list, will I be offered the option to move off-base first when the housing inventory requires?**

A36. No, offers to move off-base will only be made to members on the appropriate waiting list that aligns with the housing inventory requirement. Waiting lists are divided by rank category and housing type, e.g. JNCO 2-bedroom.

**Q37. Will the Misawa City housing market be able to accommodate the new housing demand?**

A37. Yes, the housing market in Misawa City has a surplus of American style homes.

**Q38. Will you have to move anyone off-base that does not want to move off-base?**

A38. It is not our intent to have to involuntarily direct anyone currently living on-base to relocate to off-base housing.